



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

November 22, 2005

News Release

CHICAGO PEDIATRICIAN GETS 5 YEARS FOR CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

CHICAGO—A Chicago pediatrician was sentenced to five years in prison today for receiving and possessing hundreds of computer images and videos of child pornography, including photos of victims as young as four years old engaging in sex with adults, following an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Dr. H. Marc Watzman, 39, was sentenced in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois by Judge John F. Grady to five years in prison on one count of possessing and nine counts of receiving child pornography.

Watzman pleaded guilty in June to charges that he sent thousands of dollars to a Russian-based organization called “Pedoshop” in 2003 and received hundreds of computer images and child pornography videos. ICE agents arrested Watzman Oct. 25, 2003, at his home in the 1400 block of N. Wieland during the execution of a federal search warrant. Watzman, a board-licensed physician and surgeon in Illinois specializing in pediatric medicine and anesthesiology, had his medical license suspended after his arrest.

Watzman is the latest individual to be caught up in a global ICE child pornography investigation that has targeted an Internet billing company based in Minsk, Belarus and its affiliated entities in the United States. To date, the probe has resulted in the arrest of more than 1,200 people worldwide. In January 2004, the Belarus firm was charged with money laundering as well as providing credit card billing services for 50 child pornography websites worldwide and operating child porn websites on its own. Three officers of the company were arrested in Europe and have been extradited to the United States. All three of those officers have pleaded guilty in Newark, N.J., as have four officers of two affiliated companies in Florida and California.

Having dismantled the leadership of the enterprise, ICE agents in domestic ICE offices and 52 Attache offices worldwide turned their focus to those who purchased child porn subscriptions from these sites in the United States and abroad, including Dr. Watzman.

This global Internet child pornography investigation is part of ICE's Operation Predator, a nationwide initiative to safeguard children against Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, child sex tourists, and human traffickers. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,300 individuals nationwide, including more than 300 in Illinois.

“This case is particularly disturbing because it involves a pediatrician who was entrusted by the public to care for children,” said Elissa A. Brown, special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Chicago. “ICE is using all of its tools and authorities to target those who prey on and sexually exploit children, both here or abroad. Those individuals with direct access to children take first priority.”

ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.